DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 389 303 IR 055 686

AUTHOR Luther, Vicki; Wall, Milan
TITLE Continuous Library Improvement Program: A Planning Process for Nebraska Libraries.
INSTITUTION Nebraska Library Commission, Lincoln.
PUB DATE 2 May 94
NOTE 49p.
AVAILABLE FROM Nebraska Library Commission, Attn. Library Dev., 1200 N Street, Suite 120, Lincoln, NE 68508-2023 ($9.50).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Agenda Setting; Evaluation Methods; *Library Planning; Library Services; Mission Statements; *Needs Assessment; Objectives; *Program Improvement; *Public Libraries
IDENTIFIERS *Nebraska

ABSTRACT

This guidebook has been developed to provide Nebraska communities with a practical process to reach a shared vision of library and information service and to put that vision into action in practical steps. The manual is part of the state's Continuous Library Improvement Program (CLIP), a planning process that includes goals and an action agenda. Chapters cover setting the stage for the CLIP and an overview of its planning process, with special attention to getting citizens involved. Creating a library and community profile is an essential first step. Other steps in the CLIP process, from needs assessment through evaluation, are detailed, along with a discussion of trouble shooting. Resources are presented in seven sections devoted to resources for successful meetings, for gathering information, and for the six CLIP steps. An eighth section contains examples of a vision statement, a CLIP plan, and a planning flow chart. (SLD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 389 303

Continuous Library Improvement Program: A Planning Process for Nebraska Libraries

by Vicki Lather & Milan Wall

IR055684

May 2, 1994
Published by the Nebraska Library Commission

Nebraska Library Commission

The Atrium • 1200 N St. • Suite 120
Lincoln NE 68508-2023
402-471-2045
800-307-2665

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

James Minges

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Nebraska Library Commission

The Atrium • 1200 N St. • Suite 120 • Lincoln NE 68508-2023 • 402-471-2045 • Fax 402-471-2083

Welcome to the Continuous Library Improvement Program! This guidebook has been developed to provide Nebraska communities with a practical process to reach a shared vision of library and information service and to put that vision into action in practical steps.

In order to provide a planning approach that would be useful for communities of all sizes, the Nebraska Library Commission has developed the Continuous Library Improvement Program (CLIP), of which this manual is a part. The Library Commission has contracted with the Heartland Center for Leadership Development, a nationally recognized community planning and development organization, for the development of this planning manual and delivery of regional training workshops. The staff of the Library Commission and of the six regional library systems are providing consultation and support for libraries in implementing this community planning initiative. Beginning in 1997, a portion of state aid to public libraries will be allocated to libraries implementing this or another appropriate strategic planning process.

I challenge all Nebraska librarians and library boards to get their communities involved in decisions to develop library services, and to continuously evaluate and improve those services to meet community needs.

Sincerely,

Rod Wagner

Rod Wagner
Director
Nebraska Library Commission

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1 1
Setting the Stage for the Continuous Library Improvement Program

CHAPTER 2 5
Overview of the CLIP Planning Process

CHAPTER 3 7
Getting Citizens into the Process

CHAPTER 4 8
Before You Begin: Creating a Library and Community Profile

CHAPTER 5 13
Steps in the CLIP Planning Process

CHAPTER 6 17
Trouble Shooting Planning Problems

RESOURCES 23

Section A: Resources for Successful Meetings 24
Planning and Preparation
Meeting Preparation Worksheet

Section B: Resources for Gathering Information 27
Focus Groups
Rules for Focus Groups
Strategies for Interviewers

Section C: Resources for Step 1 30
Sample Work Schedule: Getting Ready for a Town Hall Meeting
Agenda and Program
Sample Agendas and Activities
Identifying and Ranking Issues *(Activity Directions)*

Section D: Resources for Step 2 34
Sample Agenda and Activities
Get Acquainted Activity *(Directions)*
Presentation and Discussion *(Directions)*
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) *(Directions)*

Section E: Resources for Step 3 38
Sample Agenda and Activities: Vision Statement
Creating a Vision Statement *(Directions)*

Section F: Resources for Steps 4 and 5 40
Sample Agenda and Activities
Goal-Setting *(Directions)*
Sample Agenda and Activities
Developing Strategies to Meet Goals *(Directions)*
Creating Action Plans

Section G: Resources for Step 6 45
Community Planning Committee as Monitors
Annual Town Hall Meetings
Evaluation Teams
Annual CLIP Report
Updating the CLIP Plan

Section H: Examples 47
Introduction
Vision Statement
Sample CLIP Plan
CLIP Planning Steps Flow Chart

Chapter One

Setting the Stage for the Continuous Library Improvement Program

Why CLIP Will Work for Nebraska Libraries

A planning process works because it results in a practical guide for the future. The benefits of effective planning are greater community support and, ultimately, increased viability for a library. The CLIP planning process, which incorporates some elements of strategic planning, can also renew staff and volunteer commitment to the library. And, last, the CLIP planning process works because it forces an examination and therefore validates the most basic definition of what a library is and what it should offer to the community.

The CLIP planning process makes sense for libraries facing new challenges because it focuses leadership attention on the new opportunities that accompany changing times. Too often, organizations view change as threat-laden. The strategic viewpoint turns threats into opportunities!

Here is a list of additional benefits of the CLIP planning process:

1. Identifies and Exploits Unique Strengths
2. Improves Community Involvement
3. Separates Fact from Fiction
4. Increases Objectivity
5. Improves Perspective on the Present and the Future
6. Focuses Energy on Accepted Priorities
7. Forms a Common Vision
8. Nurtures New Leadership
9. Produces Action toward Desired Ends

Increasing Community Support

Involvement of citizens, officials and staff is a hallmark of good planning. Rather than moving quickly through a rigid process in a closed atmosphere, planning done effectively employs a variety of involvement techniques to allow a variety of involvement opportunities. For example, mail and telephone surveys of users, focus groups, citizen task forces, and town hall meetings are all different ways that community members might join in a planning process. Individuals may choose only one or perhaps several activities.

The great advantage of increased involvement, and therefore support, is most obvious in making the case for increased resources — budget requests or requirements for additional supplies or expanded space.

Structuring Activities and Services

Since the CLIP planning process includes goals and an action agenda, the future can been seen through this guide as a logical and systematic structure. Staff responsibilities are clarified. Community involvement needs are specified. Resources are identified. Gaining this type of understanding can invigorate a staff and community team that have been dealing with routine or ambiguity.

Validating the Library's Definition and Purpose

The CLIP planning process encourages a thoughtful examination of the most basic definitions of purpose, audiences and services. As an educational process for the public and elected officials, the validation of the library's purpose also emphasizes its importance to the quality of life in the community.

The planning process may lead to the discovery that the library's purpose has altered and that serious consideration must be given to new types of services and users. The planning process framework makes necessary change more manageable and understandable.

Library Board Involvement

The Library Board is immediately involved in the CLIP planning process as the decision to participate is discussed. The Board must approve the decision for involvement.

In addition, the CLIP planning process often produces new involvement opportunities for the Library Board. Board members should be represented on the Community Planning Committee and any other group functioning within the planning process. Regular information briefings should be conducted with the Board and reports should also be a part of Board meetings while planning is underway. It's also vital that the Board has a role in public relations, and getting information out to the community in a timely and accurate manner.

Recruiting a Community Planning Committee

An important first step in the planning process is the creation of a Community Planning Committee. An ideal Community Planning Committee should be able to:

- understand the planning process
- commit time and energy to getting the plan completed
- connect with a significant portion of the community
- represent the library in public

With these very basic criteria in mind, selection of Community Planning Committee members should be filtered through consideration of community representation.

In addition to members that represent the Library Board, the Community Planning Committee should represent the community at large. One way to achieve this is to think about your community in an analytical way. What are the main groups that make up your community? What types of people live here? Consider age groups, ethnic backgrounds and geography.

To help with recruitment, you might write a short job description for Community Planning Committee members. Describe the meeting requirements, oversight responsibilities and, above all, the tasks of reporting and connecting back to other groups in the community and helping with citizen involvement.

[notes]

[notes]

There is no magic number for the size of the Community Planning Committee. The Community Planning Committee is a citizen involvement opportunity and the size of it will vary from town to town. The size of the group may range from 3-15 people.

Marketing the Planning Process

Because community involvement is so important, marketing the planning effort takes on great importance. An initial task for the Community Planning Committee might be to discuss and then list all the ways that people in the community get information. Such a list might include:

- newspapers, local and regional
- radio stations in the area
- newsletters from clubs and churches
- community bulletin boards
- posters, flyers
- direct mail
- flyers enclosed in regular mail or billings
- individuals in the community who are "information magnets"

A weekly update in the local paper is useful both as a reminder of meetings and as a marketing device. Special events or celebrations to mark the completion of a planning activity are useful, too.

Rewarding and Motivating Volunteers

Few small libraries can do good planning without community involvement. The role of the community participants in the planning process will vary according to the way in which the planning process is adapted in each library. In some cases, community volunteers may help with specific steps in the process such as developing new programs or collecting information. In others, the main part of the planning activities will be carried out by staff and Community Planning Committee members.

However, every community participant needs both structure and rewards. Brief job descriptions for committee members can go a long way toward organizing their work and keeping them on track. All committee members need to know where their efforts fit into the planning process. A simple orientation to the planning activities might be repeated occasionally.

Keeping the Staff Involved

Staff involvement is central to the process of CLIP planning. When your staff gets together, use some time for consultation on planning topics and activities. Make sure staff members have opportunities to serve on the community planning team or task groups. Orient your staff to the entire process, and tell them that their participation is key to success!

In some ways, though, planning can be seen as threatening and disruptive so special efforts have to be made to keep the staff involved during each step in the planning process. Resistance to change will emerge from those staff members who see the planning process as a burden placed on them with no additional help or reward.

[notes]

Chapter Three

Getting Citizens into the Process

Benefits of Citizen Involvement

A healthy side effect of good planning is increased community support when decisions about budgets and resources are made. The benefits of citizen involvement go far beyond the impact on public decisions, however.

An important benefit of citizen involvement in a library planning process is the increase in ideas and information that comes from the interaction of community people. More people means additional perspectives, different sets of information and additional problem-solving viewpoints. The library may wish to include participants from the community's broader service area or region.

Citizen involvement in planning for the future of the community library also makes the library into an active, visible resource for the community. If residents — users and nonusers — learn through the planning process that the library can sponsor discussion of issues and ideas, the image of the library will expand from that of a building with books into a larger resource for the community.

Getting Good Community Representation

Basic community analysis is the first step in insuring good community representation. In order to target groups for inclusion in a planning process, you must know what groups are part of your community.

You can gain an adequate understanding of community make-up in a number of ways. Census data about your community is one quantitative indicator of age and gender groups, national origins, etc. Another interesting way to look at the community is to consider these types of categories:

- service and social clubs
- geographic sections of the community
- significant businesses, new and old
- local, state or federal government agencies with offices in the community
- churches
- media (newspaper, radio, TV, newsletters)
- health care providers and institutions
- newcomers
- retirees, young families and single parents
- children and teens

Community analysis is only the first step in getting good representation. The next level of consideration has to focus on two important questions:

1. Who might be the best representative of that group?
2. What's the best strategy to gain that person's involvement?

Your staff and Library Board members are probably your best resources to answer those questions. Board members, as citizens already volunteering time to the library, might be your most effective recruiters for the Community Planning Committee and other citizens that you may want to involve.

Keeping People Involved and Interested

Much of what has been discussed concerning marketing the planning process and rewarding volunteers is directly applicable to keeping people involved. An additional point should be made, however, concerning the results that planning produces along the way towards a plan.

Those community members who are inherently abstract thinkers will grasp the long-range importance of a vision of the future for the library. These are the people who enjoy the discussion of ideas and are able to see the "Big Picture" automatically.

However, many community members are more concrete. These are the individuals who require real-life examples and immediate results.

Creating short-term projects as well as long-term directions is important to keeping the pragmatic, concrete thinkers engaged in the planning process. Your planning process will have many events and activities that present opportunities to celebrate results. Marking the end of each step in the planning process with a report to the town council or a newspaper article will go a long way toward keeping interest high.

[notes]

Chapter Four

Before You Begin: Creating a Library and Community Profile

Before you begin the Six Step Process in the CLIP planning process for your library, you may want to collect some basic information that will serve as a beginning point. Consider this data collection as a way to create a profile or snapshot of your library and your community.

The amount and type of data that each library collects will, of course, vary. The profile you develop may be limited by staff time and resources or by the number of volunteers that are interested in this type of assignment. Since even a very simple review of the current situation will be helpful, don't assume that an elaborate data collection effort is the only way to begin.

Topics for the Library Profile

Here's an outline to use in creating a profile of your library. These questions form the most basic elements of a profile. You may have much more information available to you from previous surveys or studies. Don't overlook existing sources such as the Public Library Profiles available from the Nebraska Library Commission.

Library Information

1. Describe the facility and any service outlets.
2. Describe the annual operating budget and per capita expenditures.
3. Describe the collection (numbers of volumes and other formats available).
4. Describe staff positions, volunteers and programs.

In order to put the library in context, you'll want to create a profile of the community that is served. In this case, considerable information exists within various levels of local, county and state government. In fact, your community Chamber of Commerce may already have a community profile in use. The Department of Economic Development is another source of community profiles. Nebraska Online is also an excellent source of information.

Here's a list of topics that you'll want to make sure are described.

Community Profile

1. Describe the population characteristics of your community. Include birth, death and unemployment rates. Percentages of the population in various age categories, and other characteristics such as the number of single parent families, will also be useful.
2. Describe the economic base of the community your library serves. The mix of businesses, government and agriculture, for example, is important.
3. Describe social conditions in your community. Numbers of service clubs, churches and community ethnic mix are significant items. Well established community needs such as housing or youth programs might be mentioned here.

4. Describe educational resources related to library services. Nearby libraries, schools, colleges, etc. should be considered. Other types of information sources, such as newspapers, bookstores, computer-accessible data bases, etc., should also be described.

Information Collection Methods

A variety of methods are available for collecting the information you'll need for library and community profiles.

First of all, don't overlook the possibility that the information has already been collected by some other institution. A careful search can save duplication of efforts that cost both time and money. Previously mentioned resources include the Nebraska Library Commission, the Department of Economic Development and Nebraska Online.

If existing information seems outdated or inappropriate, you may want to consider these methods for collection.

Focus Groups

The focus group is a useful way to get opinions from a group of people who share something in common, such as an interest in using library services. Focus groups typically meet only once, just to discuss a topic.

A focus group might also evaluate certain aspects of the library or answer questions about library needs that aren't being met.

The Resource Section of this workbook includes additional information about Focus Groups.

Interviews

Personal interviews, whether done in person or on the telephone, can be very useful tools for collecting information. Typically used to gather opinions, interviews can also be part of an historical approach to subjects such as change in the library services or image over time.

More information on interviewing can be found in the Resource Section.

Surveys

Many libraries regularly use a brief survey of library users as a way to evaluate services and satisfaction or determine usage. On a larger scale, a community survey may be used to identify community opinions and needs regarding the library.

The good news is that surveys are perhaps the most flexible tools for collecting information. Unfortunately, the bad news is that surveys require considerable planning and support in order to be used successfully.

[notes]

[notes]

Mail, telephone, drop-off and collection survey methods are all used to obtain information from large numbers of community residents. Sampling of the population to be surveyed is best done with statistical considerations in mind and, if done correctly, can result in information that can be extrapolated to the entire population. Survey results can also be analyzed in a variety of ways, so that responses might be compared.

For the small library, community surveys represent a daunting task. The design of survey questions, pretesting, implementation and analysis may involve too much staff time to be plausible. This level of activity is often beyond the scope of volunteers. However, a variety of resources do exist that may be able to help a small library complete a community survey. For example, the Cooperative Extension Service may be able to offer survey assistance. The local Chamber of Commerce or economic development district may have staff with survey expertise, or nearby community college or university classes can sometimes be drafted for help and for student volunteers.

Summary: Library and Community Profiles

The small library faced with the CLIP planning process should begin by identifying existing information about the library and the community. Using the simple outline of profiles, basic descriptions can be developed.

The need for in-depth information or more elaborate methods of collecting information is an individual library choice, and depends on the situation and resources available.

Chapter Five

Steps in the CLIP Planning Process

Completing Step One:

What Do We Know About Current Conditions and Future Trends?

Step One in the CLIP planning process is organized around the question, What Do We Know about Current Conditions and Future Trends? That means that Step One activities will focus on collecting information and gathering opinions about library issues.

This step offers an opportunity to consider technological changes that have transformed so many dimensions of community life. It may be difficult to think about a small, traditional library as part of a global information revolution. However, some aspects of new technology are very accessible and important to maintain the role of the library in the community. Step One is a beginning point in the planning process that can be used to collect information and opinion about the uses of technology.

The main activity recommended for completing Step One is the identification and ranking of issues important to the future of the library. This may be done by the Community Planning Committee.

Another option for generating a list of issues and ranking them in importance is the Town Hall Meeting on the future of the library. In this setting, citizens work in small groups to list and rank issues. Detailed information on designing and conducting a town hall meeting are included in the Resource Section.

The identification of issues should grow out of the information collected in the library and community profiles. With that basic "snapshot" of information, the Community Planning Committee or town hall meeting participants can discern important issues and select several to emphasize for the rest of the CLIP planning process.

Some libraries may decide to focus on only two or three of the top ranking issues; others may select more issues and recruit citizens to assist. Either Community Planning Committee members and/or citizen volunteers can form issue subcommittees to complete the CLIP planning process.

Completing Step Two:

What Does the Information Tell Us?

Step Two involves the analysis of information by Issue Subcommittees comprised of Community Planning Committee members and/or citizens.

At this step, Issue Subcommittees examine a specific issue and data related to it. For example, if one issue is a need to expand the budget and resources of the library, then staff should prepare a handout that summarizes the information concerning that topic.

Data about the issue may come in many forms: census information about the community's population, past history of funding and future projections, or news that a community club has made regular financial donations a special service project. It's important to remember that what is required is a summary of the information and not a document that will overwhelm subcommittee members. A few pages is a good guideline, although even a single page handout may be sufficient.

The Issue Subcommittee can organize their discussion around the strengths and weaknesses of the library related to the issue under consideration. One issue such as increased budget needs will also imply both threats and opportunities, and these should also be discussed.

The Resource Section contains detailed instructions for leading discussions of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Completing Step Three:

What Will We Do Differently As a Result?

Step Three involves decisions about using the new information and insights that have resulted from the first two steps in the CLIP planning process. Most of the services that you are offering today will probably be a part of your library's service "menu" for a long time into the future. The CLIP planning process will help you identify and concentrate a portion of your time and resources on those few things that you might want to try out in the future.

An option that can help some libraries to define their services to the community, and to limit responsibility to manageable activity, is role selection. A clear idea of library roles that are appropriate for a specific community during one planning cycle can help the library to limit its effort to attainable goal areas, encourage a focus on what is really important in specific communities, and emphasize improvement rather than maintenance of effort. Roles should be based on community issues or needs and lead to the vision statement. An example of a role particularly useful in a community with a large population of Spanish-speaking workers who need to experience a degree of assimilation might be "doorway to learning." A role that might be appropriate in a community with a large proportion of retired adults might be "life-long learning center." A dynamic vision statement can grow organically out of this sense of role.

The products of Step Three are a Vision Statement and Goals for each issue previously identified. Each Issue Subcommittee can work on goals for its particular topic, but all the subcommittees can contribute to and then select a role and a Vision Statement for the library.

This Step should be grounded in the information and opinions already collected. That means Role Selection, the Vision Statement and Goals activities will result in priorities specific to the library and the community and not simply generalized ideas about the future of libraries everywhere.

Completing Steps Four and Five:

How Will We Get It Done?
Who Does What, By When?

These two steps in the CLIP planning process are often the most satisfying to participants. In Steps Four and Five, the emphasis moves from abstract, long-range goal-setting and visioning the future to the concrete strategies that describe exactly how the goals will be achieved. This is the point when the CLIP planning process becomes real for most participants.

[notes]

[notes]

For example, suppose the Issue Subcommittee working on Children's Needs developed a Goal statement like this:

- Develop a new program for Saturday mornings in July to promote reading among elementary school age children.

In Steps Four and Five, the Issue Subcommittee takes that Goal to a more specific level and considers how it will be accomplished (Strategies) and then exactly who will do what tasks by when (an Action Plan).

These two steps involve a lot of work, but they have the advantage of engaging the practical, concrete thinkers in the Issue Subcommittees. It may take two or three work sessions for each Issue Subcommittee Group to complete these steps, depending on the topics and the degree of detail involved.

Summary of Steps Four and Five:

These Strategies and Action Plans are draft versions subject to review by the entire Community Planning Committee. The Issue Subcommittees continue to work on each Goal that they developed. At this stage of the planning process, communication among subcommittees is vital. Some libraries may find that only a few people are working on an issue at this point, but even with very small groups, communication is important. If two Issue Subcommittees are working on closely related topics, it might be worthwhile to have a joint working session to select the most important goals that the subcommittees have in common.

It's probably a good idea to arrange some way to exchange information among the Issue Subcommittees or perhaps have an all-group get-together. By this time, all participants have invested considerable time and energy in the planning process and a celebration would be in order.

Completing Step Six:

How Well is it Working?

After a CLIP plan is completed, it will include the following pieces:

- Background Information such as the Library and Community Profiles
- A Vision Statement that describes the ideal or preferred future for the library
- Roles that the library fulfills
- Goal Statements
- Strategies that will accomplish each Goal
- Action Plans that designate responsibilities and timelines for each strategy

A sample CLIP plan is included in the Resource section.

An effective CLIP plan should include a monitoring method to make sure that the plan is carried out. It's true that many plans are completed and simply filed away because no monitoring or evaluation activities were built into the process. The Resource section includes several methods for building in these actions.

This last step in the CLIP planning process is also an opportunity for the library as an organization to continuously improve operations. If Steps One through Five are completed with good community representation on the Community Planning Committee and its Issue Subcommittees, then the plan itself should have enough momentum to begin a variety of projects and activities. It's the monitoring, however, that keeps the action going and the library improvement continuous.

[notes]

Chapter Six

Trouble Shooting Planning Problems

How Things Can Go Awry

The CLIP planning process for libraries has been described as a simple step-by-step method. But dealing with information, opinions and new ideas is always complex. While it's impossible to predict a process that is neat, tidy and without variation, it is possible to predict a few points at which problems may arise.

Adequate Representation of Community

Because of the nature of a community-based planning process, Community Planning Committee members and other volunteers may come and go as the Issue Subcommittees proceed through the six steps. However, one rule for keeping adequate representation is to repeatedly ask the questions, "Who's not here?" Some groups will regularly begin each meeting by asking that question.

The response isn't necessarily offered in terms of an individual or a particular name. In fact, the question points at a more careful analysis of participation by various factions within the community which must be involved if the planning process is to succeed. Asking the question on a regular basis means keeping an awareness of participation and balance issues. The next step, as mentioned in Chapter 2, is to consider follow-up actions such as personal telephone calls and invitations that will bring people back into the process.

Another response to dwindling numbers is to reward and celebrate. The CLIP planning process demands time and effort from citizens. Sometimes the meetings and work sessions can seem boring unless some attention is given to social needs and to rewarding perseverance. Maybe an Issue Subcommittee needs to hold a pot luck dinner before their next work session or combine some other pleasant event such as scheduling a performance of a school choir to entertain the group. If work and pleasure can be combined, participants are more likely to stay with the group.

Communications Confusion

Coordinating communication among the various subcommittees, the library staff and the community is vital. Some libraries may consider using a very simple one-page newsletter that keeps information about meetings and work throughout the six steps centralized. An occasional column in the local paper is another way to keep information flowing.

The management of several work subcommittees is an important job. It requires the attention of someone with organizational skills and the interest to take on tasks such as following-up with an Issue Subcommittee the morning after a meeting or making several phone calls to consolidate meeting times.

Conflict

In our culture, community conflict represents a very uncomfortable situation. For the library staff or board, community conflict can be so intimidating that the CLIP planning process is seriously disrupted.

Community conflict can develop over interpersonal differences, the use of resources or power, or perhaps deep-seated values that underpin public decisions. The source of conflict should be considered, but it's important to emphasize that managing conflict is different than resolving it. Many community conflicts may never be resolved, but the conflict situation can be managed so that the planning process can continue.

Strategies for managing conflict successfully are based on common sense. For example, when faced with a conflict or the potential of a conflict, take time to reflect. Identifying the real issue will help you to determine the appropriate reaction. It's often wise to evaluate the risk of doing nothing. In conflict situations, it's common for both sides to lock into a rigid position. When your goal shifts from managing the conflict to winning, it's time to do some reflection.

Another strategy is to carefully choose the time and place to face conflicts. In potential conflict situations, calling a "time out" can save public disagreements that quickly escalate. Taking conflict out of a public setting is an important management strategy.

It's also useful to focus on behaviors, not people. Remember that in managing conflict, vague or ambiguous criticism fuels conflict. Specific feedback on behaviors — discussed privately — can lead to changed behaviors.

Lastly, the most important aspect of managing conflict is to focus on the future. One excellent use of the Vision Statement is as a reference point during times of conflict. Simply ask whether the current disagreement is taking the community closer to the vision of the future or farther from that preferred vision.

Lack of Leadership

Identifying and recruiting community leaders is always a concern in the CLIP planning process. Most people assume that the only source of leaders that might serve as champions of a library planning project are the established leaders in elected or appointed positions. However, sometimes it helps to consider the skills that are required rather than to simply consider the names of people who might be recruited. By analyzing leadership roles in terms of what that person needs to do and know, it's often possible to identify new or emerging leaders who would welcome the chance to serve.

Community leaders are often recruited for the sake of increasing credibility of a planning process. While it's true that some official endorsement from the mayor or council is helpful, it may not be necessary to have certain positions or names take all the spaces in the Community Planning Committee.

[notes]

[notes]

Consider skills, not just names, when recruiting leaders. In this way, a new emerging pool of leaders can be identified and recruited to help with the CLIP planning process.

Resistance to Change

At some point in most planning processes, some resistance to change will be evident. Change is difficult for everyone. It may seem totally outrageous to traditional library users that the library of the future will be different from the library of their own past. Another major source of resistance might occasionally be found within the library staff itself.

There are no set rules for overcoming resistance to change. Perhaps the best advice is to keep focusing on the future and a shared goal of continuous improvement. When people are reminded of how much change our communities have already survived, it's sometimes easier to accept new proposals.

It seems to be people's expectations of change that cause resistance. For example, if a staff member expects that some proposed change will create more work for her, she may resist it. Clarifying expectations and offering complete information can go a long way in overcoming resistance to change.

Maintaining Visibility and Momentum

Many times planning processes break down because leaders don't have a strategy for keeping the process visible and making sure everything stays on track. Some planning experts call this strategy "marketing the process," suggesting that the value of the entire process must be sold and re-sold as the process continues.

In a community setting, where a significant local institution is involved, it is important to keep the public at large informed at key steps along the critical planning path. More significantly, perhaps, it is important to keep the participants up to date, so that Issue Subcommittees, and particularly the Community Planning Committee, remain knowledgeable about how the entire process is proceeding.

Using Available Communications Vehicles

The easiest and least expensive way to keep people informed is by using the already available communication vehicles within the community.

Within the library, use bulletin boards to announce a Town Hall Meeting, for example. Outside, use the community bulletin boards that get the most attention. In your town, that may be the announcement board at the post office or the senior center. It may be the student council board at school. It might be the window at the grocery or at the city office. Look for opportunities to use marquees at the bank, the mall, the co-op or the school.

The most believable communication about community events comes from other people: word of mouth remains the best available advertising channel because it has the biggest impact on the listener. This means that your Community Planning Committee and staff, by how they describe the process you are undertaking, will quickly become your best "sales" people for the value of the Continuous Library Improvement Process.

Working with the News Media

News media, especially local media, are oftentimes highly trusted sources of information about community activities and events. You may want to recruit a local radio station manager or newspaper editor to serve as a member of your Community Planning Committee. At a minimum, it is important to visit the station or the paper and find out directly how best to get information to them in a timely manner.

News media in smaller cities and towns are typically understaffed and overworked. They'll appreciate your providing information to them in the way that they can handily insert it into their radio bulletin boards or community announcement columns. Ask how you can help them tell the story of the "planning for the future" that you are undertaking with community involvement.

Look for feature angles. For example, if you have a student on your Community Planning Committee, that alone may offer an interesting angle for local or regional news coverage. Perhaps you can line up some entertainment, such as the school's swing choir or jazz band, to play a meeting.

If the news media cannot get a reporter to your meetings, ask if you can write up your own news version and deliver it to them.

Getting Accountability for Results

When volunteers are playing leadership roles in library planning, sometimes it's hard to keep things on track. Many distractions get in the way and other priorities compete for attention.

One way to ensure some accountability and keep things on track is to "make public" the process for reporting progress among the Issue Subcommittees. Each Issue Subcommittee may need to schedule its own meeting times, but you may want to encourage the groups to meet in the library and then see that a staff member is assigned to serve with that group.

Get Issue Subcommittee leaders and staff together on a periodic basis to share results of their respective progress and to call attention to each others' progress and problems.

Celebrate Success

Find lots of ways to celebrate successes, even "little wins" along the planning path, so that staff and volunteers know that they are appreciated.

[notes]

[notes]

Sometimes all you need to do is say "thank you" when progress feels good. At other times, maybe you will need to do something a little more special.

Here are some ideas to think about:

- Take each Issue Subcommittee leader or Community Planning Committee member to lunch on a schedule throughout the process.
- Bring a rose or a carnation to the first Issue Subcommittee session for the group leader.
- Do a "ribbon-cutting" when you unveil your completed plan.
- Get a local business to sponsor a "congratulations" advertisement in the local newspaper.

A Last Word About the CLIP Planning Process

Above all, remember that the CLIP planning process is very flexible. The six steps described in this workbook follow a logical path to a complete plan, but each library should adapt the suggested techniques to its own special community context.

Planning does work. If time and effort are invested in an organized way, the result will be a road map to a stronger future for Nebraska libraries.

Resources

Section A: Resources for Successful Meetings

Planning and Preparation

Meetings can be classified into two general types: informational and problem-solving. Within the planning process, there will be occasions when a meeting is clearly one or the other, but there may also be occasions when a meeting contains elements of both. A Town Hall Meeting, for example, may be used to share information in the first half and then engage participants in a problem-solving activity in the second half.

Successful meetings have some characteristics in common:

- preparation
- clear agenda
- both listening and talking by participants
- appropriate length
- start/stop times as agreed
- introductions so that everyone knows one another
- updates on previous meetings to create a common knowledge base

Preparation

Preparing for a meeting is somewhat like preparing for a party. In fact, a superlative hostess/host makes sure everyone knows what to expect as part of the invitation, is comfortable at the event, and feels listened to and appreciated. Those expectations are exactly the same for a successful meeting.

Here's a brief work sheet that you can use to prepare for meetings. The work sheet can be filled out by an individual or used as a discussion focus for a small group that's doing the planning.

Meeting Preparation Worksheet

Purpose

What are the three most important results you'd like to see from this meeting?

Timing

How long should the meeting last? When is the best time to hold the meeting? Are there any competing events that will draw away attendance?

Agenda

What items will be on the agenda? Who will prepare and distribute the agenda? How will participants help in developing the agenda? Will there be open space on the agenda for additions? Will the agenda allow for both listening and speaking time for participants (e.g. small group discussions, introductions at tables, etc.)? Are breaks needed?

Participants

Who should attend? How will these people be invited? Does the list include a representative mix of community members? Who will do follow-up to the meeting invitation/notice?

■

Physical Arrangements

What facilities and equipment are required? How should the meeting room be arranged? Will name tags be necessary? Is a registration or sign-in table a good idea? Should refreshments be available?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

■

Role Assignment

What role assignments need to be made? For example, recorder, timekeeper, convener or "master of ceremonies," discussion leader, presenter, small group facilitator.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

■

Evaluation

How will this meeting be evaluated in order to improve the next session?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Section B: Resources for Gathering Information

Focus Groups

Focus groups meet on a one-time basis. They are used to conduct in-depth interviews with small groups of individuals who have something in common. Within the context of a library planning process, a focus group offers an excellent way to collect information and opinions from library users and non-users.

Rules for Focus Groups

Here are some rules that offer an excellent framework for organizing a focus group.

1. Recruit groups that have something in common.
2. Keep the group number within an ideal range of 7-12 people.
3. Plan no more than two hours per session.
4. Start with a question that everyone can answer.
5. Let everyone have a final comment.
6. Select a skilled moderator.
7. Use a separate note taker or recorder.
8. Keep the discussion conversational and relaxed.
9. Don't let one person dominate.
10. Get quiet people into the discussion as often as possible.
11. Decide on all of the key (focus) questions in advance.
12. Probe for meaning during the group discussion by asking for examples and elaborations on comments.

Strategies for Interviewers

While most people carry on conversations without much preplanning or follow-up, the task of the interviewer is much more structured. The interviewer must focus on three elements: preplanning, conducting and then documenting the conversation.

Here are some strategies than can improve the results while making the interview itself much more manageable.

Preplanning the Interview

In the best circumstances, a training session will be held in which the purpose of the interview and the desired outcome is clear to the interviewers. However, even when such a training session is held, the interviewer must still do some homework. Background information about the person to be interviewed (the informant) is helpful in both questioning and listening.

It's a good idea to have an outline of points that should be covered during the interview. Some interviewers find that a check list is helpful to make sure that all the topics are covered during the conversation.

Preplanning is vital but that doesn't mean that the questions must be memorized or that the interview has to follow a rigid format.

Conducting the Interview

Interviews should have a beginning, a middle and an end. Introductions set the tone and allow the interviewer to establish rapport with the informant. Is there a need to establish credibility? Is informality the best approach? What influence will the surroundings have on the interview? These questions should frame the beginning of the interview so that the informant can be set at ease.

An important part of conducting the interview is listening so that the conversation can be guided. An expert interviewer will build questions on the informant's previous remarks so that the interview flows in a fashion similar to a conversation. Nonverbal cues such as nodding, smiling or leaning forward are effective ways to encourage the informant.

The interviewer should also summarize the conversation occasionally in order to keep on track. Paraphrasing a comment is a useful way to check understanding.

Broad, general questions lend themselves to more specific follow-up requests for examples or additional information. It's useful to have several basic questions to begin and several themes to use as a structure for the middle or main part of the interview.

During the interview, there may be moments of silence that can be uncomfortable for the interviewer. Most often, it makes sense to just wait for the informant to begin speaking again. The temptation is to ask and answer your own questions in order to fill the silence.

Closing the interview requires judgment as to timing, and a simple "thank you" and explanation of next steps. Sometimes closing the interview can be handled by repeating some of the information that was used as an introduction, especially the purpose of the interview.

Documenting the Interview

Most interviewers take notes in some form. Tape recorders can be used but some people find them intrusive. (Laptop computers can be used if the interviewer can use the keyboard and not lose eye contact. Laptops can often be a great icebreaker with informants who are curious about the machine.)

If notes are taken, it's important that the interviewer scan them as soon as possible after the interview to clarify points. Writing a summary soon after is another helpful way to capture information and impressions.

A standardized format for both notes and summaries is very important, especially if several interviewers are working on a project. The name of the informant, date, place and information about the interviewer are all vital to reconstructing the interview at a later date.

Summary

Interviews collect information, perceptions and impressions. They are most effective when used in conjunction with other types of data collection techniques and especially good for providing historical information. The interview provides an important personal and human dimension to data collection.

Section C: Resources for Step 1

Sample Work Schedule
Getting Ready for a Town Hall Meeting

Week 1

Community Planning Committee work session identifies date, time and place for Town Hall Meeting. Topics include: PR; Program; Refreshments; Facility; Childcare; Registration Table & Nametags. Goal is 100 in attendance. Facility is reserved via telephone call during the meeting.

Group decides on "Chocolate Competition" during the Town Hall meeting break time. The three members agree to recruit at three "entries" of 3 dozen cookies. Participants at the Town Hall will have a chance to vote on the best chocolate cookie in town.

Press release and flyers drafted featuring the Chocolate Cookie Competition as refreshment break. Information sent by library to media and church newsletters. Third grade teacher agrees to have her class create posters for downtown store windows. Flyers to be mailed to each resident with water bills by the city.

Childcare secured for no charge at local church for the evening of the Town Hall Meeting; 4-H Club will provide additional volunteers but the regular childcare program of the church will be in place, taking care of supervision and insurance concerns.

Week 2

Community Planning Committee meets and creates a Telephone Tree list with each member calling 10 neighbors. Each member also agrees to speak to a service club or church group about the Town Hall meeting.

Posters in place downtown, letters to the editor showing up in the local paper from Community Planning Committee members asking people to attend; librarian visits high school and asks senior class officers to help at Town Hall and for each class to send two representatives.

Week 3

Roles in the program decided and discussion activities planned. Evaluation form written that will provide information on the success of the meeting.

Public service announcements are on the local radio. Community Planning Committee meets for report on telephone call progress and review of the program.

Week 4

Facilities check in the afternoon of meeting day. Thirty minutes before the Town Hall Meeting starts, the Registration Table is ready. All Community Planning Committee members greet community residents at the door and Mayor offers official welcome.

Agenda and Program

As you can see from the sample timeline, your Town Hall Meeting should have an official welcome from the Mayor or another elected official. If other officials (including Library Board members) are present, they should be introduced. No more than 20 minutes should be used at the beginning of the meeting to handle these introductions and offer a simple, straightforward statement about the purpose of the meeting.

After these brief statements, the real work of the Town Hall Meeting can start. The discussion leader should be someone who can give clear directions to the participants, keep time and offer comments or summarize remarks at the end of the working time. Sometimes it's helpful to have a team of two people guide the group through the small group discussions of community issues.

Sample Agendas and Activities

Here's a sample agenda for a Town Hall and the directions for discussion groups. Remember, this is <u>just a sample</u> to offer an idea of what such an agenda might look like.

Agenda
Community Issues

7:00 p.m.	Welcome & Introductions Mayor Sharon Smith Background Of The Library Planning Project Ed Hernandez, President of Library Board
7:30 p.m.	Community Issues: Group Discussion Lois Dubicek, Librarian Arne Hansen, School Principal
8:15 p.m.	Refreshment Break
8:40 p.m.	Selecting the Most Important Issues Arne Hansen, School Principal
9: 00 p.m.	Next Steps in the Process: Issue Subcommittee Lois Dubicek, Librarian
9: 30 p.m.	Evaluation and Adjourn Ed Hernandez, Library Board

Discussing and Ranking Issues

Directions:

1. The discussion leader introduces the activity by briefly explaining the importance of identifying community issues and finding out which are most important to the participants. The following points might be used.
   - Leaders are faced with an excess of issues and information and have to narrow the focus in order to get to action.
   - Issues surface through discussion and analysis.
   - Opinions and judgments are important in the identification of community issues.

2. Each participant is asked to work as an individual and list at least three issues that he/she thinks are important to the future of the library. Five minutes are allowed for people to consider and write down their ideas. The discussion leader can judge the amount of time needed by watching as participants stop writing.

3. After each individual completes that task, the discussion leader directs each table group to share their ideas and create a shared list. This may be recorded on newsprint or on paper provided by the discussion leader. About 30 minutes should be allowed for this discussion, although many groups complete the task in less time. The discussion leader should be alert to when most groups are finished, and move to the next activity when appropriate.

4. When most groups are finished, the discussion leader can announce that about three minutes are left and ask that remaining groups finish.

5. Participants are then directed to move to the refreshment break and to hand in their shared list (newsprint or other paper) to the discussion leader.

6. During the break, the discussion leader and helpers review the table lists and create, on newsprint, a master list that includes the ideas from all tables. No more than three issues should be recorded on each piece of newsprint. The newsprint should then be posted in the meeting room on one wall at eye level in an area that is accessible to all participants.

7. After the break, the group reconvenes. Each participant receives five self-stick dots and is directed to go to the newsprint and "vote" with the dots, selecting the issues they feel are most important. All five dots can be placed on one issue or distributed as each person wishes.

8. After everyone has voted, the discussion leaders count the dots and list the top five issues (those with the most dots). These issues are then announced as the topics for five Issue Groups and each one is written on newsprint.

9. The discussion leaders explain that the Community Planning Committee will use this list of top ranking issues to develop a CLIP plan for the library. Several of the issues will be selected as the focus for the plan. The Community Planning Committee will be organized into Issue Subcommittees and will work together to identify strengths and weaknesses of the library. Community members are welcome to join the Community Planning Committee to help with work on these issues and can contact the library for more information.

10. Evaluation forms for the meeting are distributed and the meeting is adjourned.

Section D: Resources for Step 2

Sample Agenda and Activities

Here's a sample agenda for a first meeting of an Issue Subcommittee. In this meeting, two items will be accomplished. First, the subcommittee will review a summary of available information about their particular topic. Second, members will analyze the library's strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and threats that are implied in the issue. The agenda for the participants will look like this:

Agenda
Issue Subcommittee on Children's Needs

7:00 p.m.	Welcome and Get Acquainted
7:20 p.m.	Background on the Issue Presentation and Discussion
8:15 p.m.	Break
8:30 p.m.	Analyzing Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Small Group Discussions
9:30 p.m.	Next Meeting Date: Next Steps Adjourn

The directions for the activities in this agenda follow.

Get Acquainted Activity

Directions:

The leader introduces herself/himself and then asks each person to do the same. In addition to name, each person is asked to answer at least one additional question. In this way, some structure is given to introductions, and participants feel more relaxed about speaking up during the meeting. Some examples of additional information requests include:

- first time you remember using a library
- length of time you've resided in our community
- one thing you really like about our library
- what you'd like the children in the community to think about the library
- an important function or purpose of the library in your opinion

This type of introduction also sets the tone for the meeting and helps to establish the topics for discussion. The leader should plan about two minutes per person for introductions.

Presentation and Discussion

Directions:

1. The leader distributes a brief summary of information. This handout should be at least one page but no longer than 10 pages. Each participant receives a copy.

2. The leader, or another presenter, then offers highlights from the handout. This presentation should take no more than five minutes and should briefly review the general contents of the handout. Questions should be held until later in the activity, if possible.

3. Small groups of three to eight are organized around tables. The leader then instructs each group to name a recorder/reporter and then to work together to answer the following questions:

- Referring to your handout, what is an example of information that surprised you?
- Referring to your handout, what is an example of information that validated something that you already knew?
- Referring to your handout, what is an example of information that needs more explanation?

The questions may be posted on newsprint, chalkboard or overhead.

4. The leader instructs the group that they have about 25 minutes for this part of the activity and that the recorder in each small group should be prepared to share their discussion with the large group.

5. After the discussion time is completed, the leader begins the reports by asking each small group in turn for their comments on the first question. This continues until all groups have reported or the leader judges that enough time has been spent. The process is repeated for the additional questions.

6. The leader concludes the activity with a summary statement about the information. Next steps might be to get additional information or explanation as needed for the next meeting.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Discussions

Directions:

1. The leader explains that a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) is a standard part of the analysis required by the CLIP planning process. It is a way to organize information and opinions so that strategic choices can be made. A main point that should be made is:

The CLIP planning process allows an organization to combine its STRENGTHS with OPPORTUNITIES in order to take control of its own future.

2. Participants are organized in small groups around tables. Each group is instructed to name a recorder and use newsprint to summarize their discussions.

3. Allowing about 10 minutes for each, the leader asks the small groups to list the Strengths and Weaknesses of the library and then the Opportunities and Threats that they see implied in their particular issue/topic. Each part of the SWOT should be listed on a separate sheet of newsprint.

Note: Examples for the Discussion Leader

Here are examples of Strengths and Weaknesses that might result from such a discussion.

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
• good for city	• inadequate reference materials
• staff are dedicated	• not enough money for acquisition in budget
• relationship with K-12 setting	• never had a long-range plan before
• experienced library board	• small percentage of residents are users

Opportunities and Threats are discussed in reference to a particular issue. Here are examples of Threats and Opportunities that might result from a group discussing the issue of children's needs.

Threats	Opportunities
• potential conflict with school	• children under 10 are the largest age group
• might take resources away from other library programs	• new program might bring parents into the library
• might require additional training	• new volunteer has talent as a story teller

4. After about 40 minutes, the leader asks the groups to use masking tape and display their newsprint. All the lists of Strengths should be displayed together, etc. Some groups may complete the task more quickly than others and the leader should judge when to announce the end of the activity.

5. The leader then allows some time for review and comments on similarities among the lists.

6. The activity ends with the leader explaining that this information will be transferred to a report form and used as the basis for the next meeting: setting goals and developing a vision statement.

Section E: Resources for Step 3

Sample Agenda and Activities: Vision Statement

Work sessions of the Issue Subcommittees should take place regularly. Using about two hours for each session, two or three sessions should be enough to complete goals and the Vision Statement. The activity that is used for creating a Vision Statement is simple and can be completed by an Issue Subcommittee in one work session. This activity also requires a smaller group of volunteers to draft the one- or two-paragraph Vision Statement for the Community Planning Committee to review.

Here's a sample agenda for a work session in which the Vision Statement is addressed.

AGENDA
Issue Subcommittee on Children's Needs

7:00 p.m.	Welcome and Get Acquainted
7:15 p.m.	Update on Other Subcommittees' Progress
7:30 p.m.	Vision Statement Overview
7:45 p.m.	Describing the Preferred Future: Small Group Activity
8:15 p.m.	Break
8:30 p.m.	Next Steps: Recruiting for the Writers Subcommittee Next Meeting Date
8:45 p.m.	Adjourn

The directions for the activities in this agenda follow.

Creating a Vision Statement

Directions:

1. The leader should be prepared to explain the importance of a Vision Statement to the group. One easy method is to use the example of planning a family vacation in which a **destination** is a major decision. A roadmap or travel plan is also part of the vacation. Each member of the family probably imagines what the destination will be like and, if they have a shared idea of that place, then they do share a **vision** of their vacation. For the library, the CLIP plan is like a road map and the Vision Statement is a description of what the preferred future might be like.

2. Sample Vision Statements might also be helpful in explaining the importance of the Vision Statement. Check the Resource section of this guide for samples that can be used.

3. Participants should be organized into groups of three to five at tables. The leader directs each individual to work alone and list at least three words or phrases that describe the library in the future. For example, "full of kids at a story hour," or "with a resource center for young families," or "new furniture," or "volunteers." Allow at least five minutes for individuals to work on their lists.

4. After participants have stopped working on their individual lists, the leader directs each small group to create a shared list by allowing each member to state one item from his/her list in turn. Each table group should have some newsprint on which to record the list. Allow 10 to 15 minutes for listing.

5. Each piece of newsprint is posted and the leader comments on similarities and themes in the words and phrases. The leader explains that this list will be used as the basis for writing a Vision Statement and that each Issue Subcommittee will be doing this same activity toward that end.

6. At this point, the leader recruits a volunteer from this Issue Subcommittee to work with volunteers from the other subcommittees, to take these lists and create a Vision Statement. This writing group should be able to complete this task in one session. The draft Vision Statement will be reviewed by all the Issue Subcommittees.

Section F: Resources for Steps 4 and 5

Sample Agendas and Activities

Each Issue Subcommittee will be responsible for setting goals related to its topic. Goal-setting with the subcommittee can be accomplished in one or two work sessions of about two hours each. Here's a sample agenda for an Issue Subcommittee work session on Goals.

Agenda
Goal Setting

7:00 p.m.	Welcome and Get Acquainted
7:15 p.m.	Update on other Issue Subcommittees Review of Vision Statement
7:30 p.m.	Goal-setting for our Issue Presentation and Discussion
7:45 p.m.	Small Group Activity
8:15 p.m.	Break Select Priority Goals
8:30 p.m.	Review of Top Five Goals Discussion
9:00 p.m.	Next Meeting Date Adjourn

The directions for the activities in this agenda follow.

Goal-Setting

The activity for goal-setting is very similar to the activity used at the Town Hall Meeting. Individuals work alone, then in groups at tables to generate lists. A master list is created by the leader and participants use self-stick dots to indicate their choices for the top five goals.

Directions:

1. The leader should offer a very brief presentation about goals. Remind the group that this Step in the CLIP planning process is focused on the question, "What Will We Do Differently as a Result?" and that they should answer the question based on the activities completed so far. Goals should have these characteristics:

- measurable
- understandable
- flexible
- achievable
- acceptable to the community

2. The leader directs individuals seated in small groups at tables to work alone and list at least three goals for the library related to their topic. An example of a goal for an Issue Subcommittee on Children's Needs might be:

- **to develop a new program for Saturday mornings in July to promote reading among elementary age children**

3. After individuals have had a chance to work alone, the table groups are directed to create a shared list and record it on newsprint. About 30 minutes is allowed for this part of the activity and the leader should then collect all the newsprint lists.

4. During the break, the leader (and others as needed) review the newsprint lists and create a "Master List" of goals on newsprint. Several related goals from different table lists can then be combined into one goal statement. The master list should display no more than two goals per sheet of newsprint, allowing plenty of room for each goal. These lists should be displayed together in an area that will allow enough room for participants to move around.

5. After the break, the leader reviews the Master List and instructs each participant to select the five goals that he/she feels are most important. Each participant receives five self-stick dots to use as votes and places the dots on the newsprint next to his/her choices.

6. When all the voting is completed, the group counts the dots/votes and the top five goals are identified. The leader announces that the next work session will focus on what actions will be needed to achieve the goals.

Sample Agenda and Activities

Work sessions for the Issue Subcommittees should be held more frequently in order to maintain continuity while completing Steps Four and Five. Once a pattern for focusing on a Goal and developing Strategies and an Action Plan is established, the next work sessions will go quickly. Here's a basic agenda that can be used in these two steps.

Agenda
Strategy Development

7:00 p.m.	Welcome and Get Re-acquainted
7:15 p.m.	Update on other Issue Subcommittees
7:30 p.m.	Review of Goal Statements
7:45 p.m.	Strategy Development: Brainstorming Activity
8:15 p.m.	Break
8:30 p.m.	Discussion of Strategies
8:45 p.m.	Action Planning: Small Group Activity
9:15 p.m.	Review of Action Plans
9:30 p.m.	Next Meeting Date Adjourn

The directions for the activities in this agenda follow.

Developing Strategies to Meet Goals

After the Goals set by the group have been reviewed and displayed on newsprint, chalkboard or overhead, the topic of Strategy development can be introduced.

Directions:

1. The leader offers an example of a goal and strategies that will answer the question, "How will it get done?" Here's one example that might be used.

Issue: Children's Needs

Goal: Develop a new Saturday morning program in July to promote reading among elementary school children

Strategies:

- Call or visit other libraries for similar programs
- Investigate the collection to assure adequate materials
- Interview elementary school teachers for comments and ideas
- Develop a budget that will take into account staff time, promotion and materials
- Contact several service clubs to suggest sponsorship of the new program

2. The leader should encourage the group to be specific and to identify as many Strategies as possible for each goal.

3. Using a newsprint flip chart or similar recording method, the leader asks the group to create a list of strategies by brainstorming. In this activity, all ideas are welcome and don't have to be fully explained until later, so members are encouraged to be as creative as possible.

4. After the list is developed and several sheets filled, the leader asks the group to consider the list. Are there Strategies that can be combined? Eliminated? Need more explanation?

5. When the group is satisfied with the list, the leader describes the next step: Creating an Action Plan for each Strategy.

Creating Action Plans

1. The leader announces that an Action Plan is needed for each Strategy. Using the same example, here's a sample Action Plan.

Issue: Children's Needs

Goal: Develop a new program on Saturday mornings in July to promote reading among elementary school children

Strategy: Call or visit other libraries for similar programs.

Actions:	Who	What	By When
	Carol G.	call three libraries	August 15
	Fred R.	visit nearby library	August 7

2. Similar detail is suggested for each Strategy. This is the part of the CLIP plan that will determine how useful the plan is. The leader divides the brainstormed list of Strategies among the table groups and directs then to draft an Action Plan for each strategy. The leader reminds the group that they can suggest assignments for people and organizations if appropriate. For example, if a community member has a particular expertise that would be a perfect fit with a strategy, the group can list that person's name. The leader should caution the group, however, not to list a staff person for all the jobs!

3. When the allotted time has passed, the leader asks each small group to display their newsprint action plan for review by the entire subcommittee. If time allows, comments and suggestions can be made for each action plan.

4. The leader should end the meeting by setting the expectation that each goal will be dealt with in this way and Strategies and Action Plans will be completed for all the goals that the Group developed.

Section G: Resources for Step 6

Community Planning Committee as Monitors

The most obvious method for monitoring the progress of plan implementation is to transform the Community Planning Committee into an official group that checks up on activities and reports to the Library Board or the City Council. A regular report at three- or six- month intervals will give timely warning if volunteers have lost interest or if a proposed activity is no longer viable. A report like this can take the form of a memo or a report by a Community Planning Committee member. It's important to weigh the pros and cons of designating library staff in this capacity, though. Monitoring should be done by a neutral group, if possible, in order to avoid any conflict of interest.

Another option is for the Community Planning Committee to schedule a meeting several months to a year in the future to evaluate the planned action steps and to set a direction for further improvement.

Annual Town Hall Meetings

Another monitoring method is to convene a Town Hall Meeting annually. In this way, issues, goals and strategies can be re-examined. This is also an excellent opportunity to celebrate achievements and give public recognition for staff and volunteers. Annual Town Hall Meetings focused on the library can also become a regular public relations event that helps the visibility of the library while keeping the CLIP plan up to date.

Evaluation Teams

Creating an evaluation team of library users and staff is another way to check on the progress of implementing the CLIP plan. Using interviewing techniques, an evaluation team of three or four persons could collect impressions of the impact of the plan (Has anything changed since the CLIP plan was finished?). An official report to the Library Board would be appropriate. An evaluation team might be made up of library users or recruited from among college students and faculty or the Cooperative Extension Service. An evaluation team from outside the community can offer an external perspective and the "outsider" credibility that a local team might lack.

Annual CLIP Report

Completion of the report on CLIP implementation in the annual Statistical Report to the Nebraska Library Commission provides an opportunity to record and report the monitoring information developed through any of these monitoring methods.

Updating the CLIP Plan

Keeping track of what's been accomplished and then re-focusing the attention of staff and volunteers on Goals left unfinished in the plan is the purpose of monitoring. Monitoring the CLIP plan has a broader meaning, however, if you consider the timeliness of the plan itself. Some communities or organizations really do accomplish all the goals in a CLIP plan and should begin the planning steps again. It's much more common, though, for a plan to be revised and expanded as time goes on in response to accomplishments.

Realistically, a CLIP plan should be updated every two or three years. This suggested time frame can change in response to significant events that have an impact on the library or the community. For example, if the library receives a large bequest or gift collection, it would make sense to look at what might change in the CLIP plan. An increase in minority population, as another example, would also suggest a plan update. Or new legislation at the state level might change operations in some way and result in a need to revise the CLIP plan.

Section H: Sample Planning Products

VISION STATEMENT
Hometown Library
Hometown, Nebraska

Introduction:

Hometown Library serves a county area that includes five small communities in an agriculturally rich area of the state. This Vision Statement was completed with the participation of the three library staff members, library board members and 46 community members serving as part of four Issue Subcommittees in the CLIP planning process.

Vision Statement:

Hometown Library will be an educational center for the area in the future. With broad-based citizen support, library funding will increase and an additional meeting space will be created in the facility. Many community groups will use the library for meetings and as an information resource.

A special focus of the library will be meeting the needs of children and families. Innovative programs will be conducted with the help of many volunteers and, on any given day, the library will be filled with area residents using print and film resources and taking advantage of on-line computer information.

In the future, the library will be seen as an integral part of the area's economic development plans, supplying information and serving as an example of the high quality of life enjoyed in our area.

Sample CLIP Plan

Community and Library Profile:

Community population: 2500
K-12 grades enrollment: 500 children
20% of community residents registered as users
10% are regular users
Of the regular users, 1% are male and .5% are young adults
90% of the people who visit the library check out books

Issue:

School library services are minimal

Vision Statement:

The library provides information and materials to all members of the community both for personal enrichment and community growth.

Roles:

Community information center
Formal education support center

Goals:

To establish and publicize reference materials to supplement the school curriculum with emphasis at the high school level

Strategies:

- To add to ready reference collection
- To promote the library's role in developing study skills, making better grades, and writing research papers to young adults, teachers and parents

Action:

We will spend 20% of the materials budget on resources that relate directly to study skills and research project.

We will schedule three programs to be offered during the school year on topics related to "effective use of library resources for school success."

We will prepare book and material lists that can be distributed at the circulation desk on hot topics that young adults are concerned about.